

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 2, 9, and 10 are amended. No new matter is added. Claim 7 is cancelled. Claims 1, 2, 4-6, and 8-11 are pending and under consideration.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 112

Claims 1, 2, 4-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants amend the claims herewith to recite "storing first correspondences" and "storing second correspondences", respectively. Support for the claim amendments is found in the originally filed specification, for example, FIGS. 2 and the corresponding description for the first correspondences and FIG.3 and the corresponding description for the second correspondences. In light of claim amendments, Applicants believe that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph should be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 101

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 because it is alleged that the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is directed to statutory subject matter being tied to a machine. Claim 1 is directed to an information-gathering method employed in an information-gathering system for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios. The information-gathering system for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios is a machine. An exemplary embodiment of the information-gathering system for holding dialogues with customers based on dialogue scenarios is illustrated in FIG. 1, element 3 and described in the specification accordingly.

In view of the above explanation, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §101 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejections under 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 2, 4, 7-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0128898 to Smith Jr. et al. (hereinafter "Smith") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,381,744 to Nanos et al. ("Nanos").

Independent claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 are amended herewith to recite features similar to the features originally recited in claim 7 which is now cancelled. None of the cited references, Smith or Nanos, discloses or renders obvious the features newly added to the independent claims. Specifically, the information-gathering system bills the destination addresses according to stored billing criteria, for providing the dialogue content and the customer information.

Thus, amended independent claims 1 and 9 patentably distinguish over the prior art at least by reciting:

- storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content according to the billing criteria; and
- reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

Amended independent claim 2 and claims 4-6, 8 and 11 depending from claim 2 patentably distinguish over the prior art at least because the following features of claim 2 are not disclosed or rendered obvious:

- a billing storage unit storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- a billing unit determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content; and
- a notification unit reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

Amended independent claim 10 patentably distinguishes over the prior art at least by reciting:

- a billing storage unit storing billing criteria for billing for transmitted dialogue scenarios;
- a billing unit determining billing totals regarding the dialogue content; and
- a notification unit reporting the billing totals to the destination addresses for the dialogue content.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Serial No. 09/961,181

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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